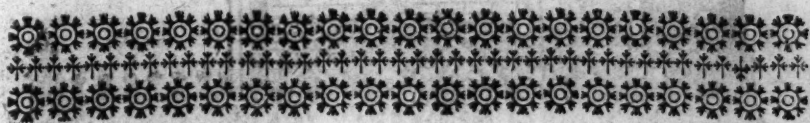
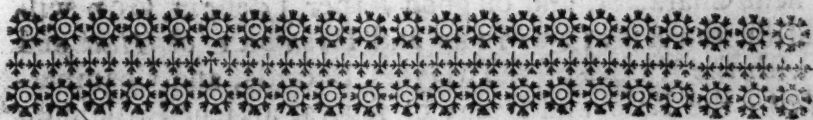
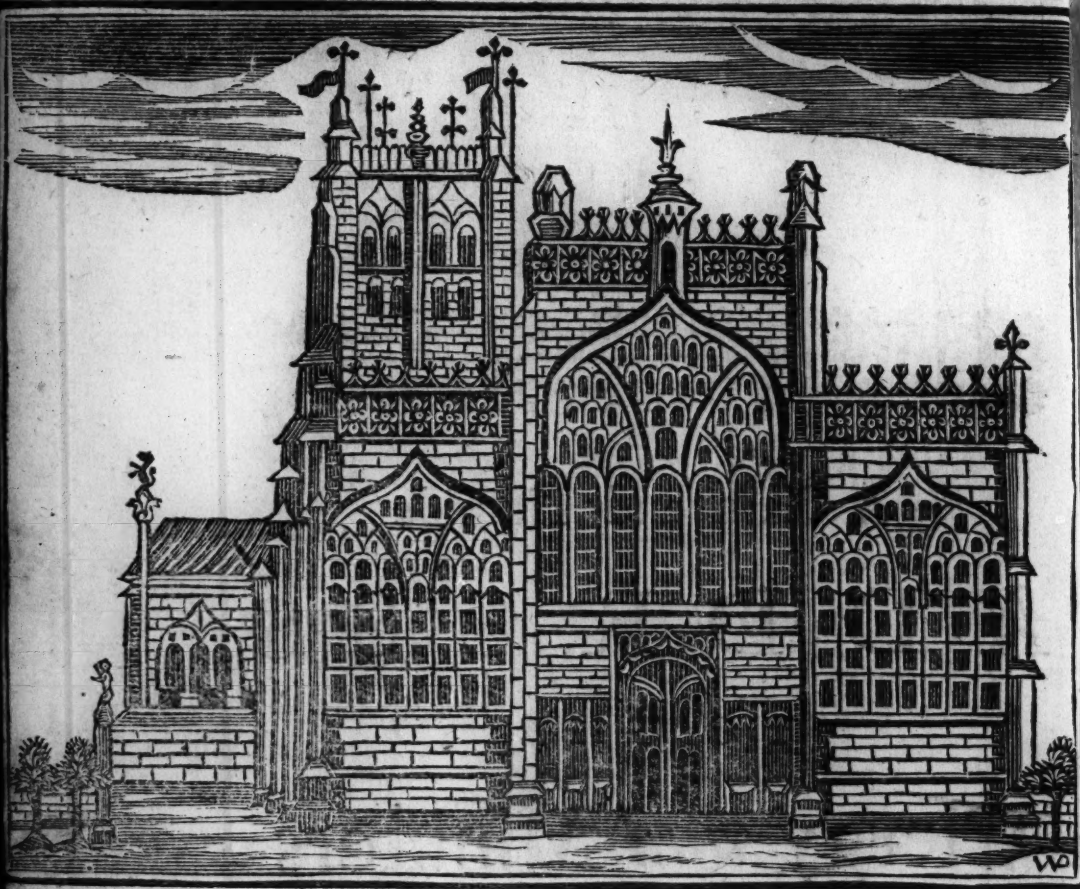


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A Plain and Humble
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
Clergy *and* Ministers
O F
Great - Britain.





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A Plain and Humble ADDRESS
to the Clergy and Ministers
in GREAT-BRITAIN.

A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY

Reading Mr. Bowman's

Visitation Sermon,

At the Visitation held at *Wakefield*,
in *TORKSHIRE*.

II. COR. ii. 16. *And who is sufficient for*
these Things ?

D E D I C A T E D

To the Rev^d. Dr. *LEGH*, Vicar of
Hallifax, in the same County.

By a Lover of True HOLINESS, and
Real CHRISTIANITY.

TORK: Printed by THOMAS GENT; and Sold
by GEORGE FERRABY, Bookseller, in *HULL*.

M DCC XXXI.

A paper and book of
to the College and
in 1785-1786

S E R M O N

Preached at
Vestry Room
At the Vestry Room
in 1785-1786

By the Rev. Mr. L. H. W. W. W.

To the Rev. Mr. L. H. W. W. W.

By a member of the Vestry

For 1785-1786

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The DEDICATION.

To the Reverend Doctor LEGH, *Vi-*
car of HALLIFAX *in* Yorkshire.

S I R,

THE following Discourse I offer to You as the Product of Friendship, and Esteem ; which Your own Merit claims as Your Due. I'm at no Loss to find a Patron ; since Your Candour, and Good-Will to Mankind, promises a favourable Reception. What may be plain, and unfinish'd ; You know how to excuse, for the Sake of the HONESTY, and SINCERITY, I hope, You will find. SINCERITY is ever Your Favourite ; and recommends not only Persons, but Performances, to Your Notice ; who well know, how to try, and judge of Men. Go where You will, that Excellency is sure found with You ; to distinguish You, the Delight of Your Friends ; and to make Those, who are not already so, ambitious of Your Acquaintance.

To that Part of Your Character, I might add the *Christian*, the *Gentleman*, the *Scholar*. But must with Caution avoid all Encomium
and

and Panegyrick, least I put Your excessive Modesty out of Countenance; and cause Your profound Humility to reject all Pretensions to what obviously You have a just Title to. I shall therefore judge for none but myself, for fear of injuring a Character, every Way, so deserving, and valuable, to Men of Piety, and good Sense.

How happy wou'd it be for the Publick to have our *Pulpits* thus fill'd! With Men, full of Love, and Compassion, to the Souls of Men! Such, who take a Delight (with their Blessed LORD) to go about *Doing Good* to all; expressing their Meekness, and Lowly-Mindedness by suiting themselves to Persons of the lowest Rank; when the Interest of CHRIST, and the Good of SOULS, require it.

Might I, SIR, indulge myself in all my Mind suggests, I must then run thorough the many Excellencies of the most inoffensive, self-denying Christian: Who desires rather to be Good, than Great; and has learnt to behave becomingly, and with an equal Disposition, in every Scene of Life. All this, I cou'd apply to Yourself, as a Person, in whom these Excellencies peculiarly shine.

What Tenderess, and Sympathy, have I observ'd in You to the Afflicted, either in Body, Mind, or Estate; as well as rejoycing at the Goods Your Friends have at any Time receiv'd. How affable and free in your Conversation, strictly sober, and with a just Guard against what is vain and empty; but much delighted with every Opportunity of pious, useful Discourse. How distinguishing and manly is Your
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The Dedication.

vii

Abhorrence of Calumny, and Detraction ! An Evil found too frequently, not only amongst private Christians ; but, alas ! in Ministers of the same Gospel, and Servants of the same LORD ; even to the Detriment and Hindrance of the Work, which they are requir'd with Brotherly Love, and Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, to promote, and carry on.

The Spirit of Discord and Dissention I know You are always sorry to see, especially amongst good People : For Peace, Love, and Unity, is the darling Temper You delight in, as the Ornament to the Christian Profession, and which Harmony ever adorns the Doctrine of CHRIST.

I cou'd here relate to you many Things which have caus'd the loose Part of Mankind to take indecent Liberties with the Clergy, and Ministers of all Orders amongst us ; but shall enter no further into the private Characters and Behaviour of any. Such Things are best cover'd with a Mantle of Love, that have been less exemplary, and disagreeable.

The Motive, which chiefly led me to publish this Sermon, was purely to remind all that read it, that the *Work of the Ministry* is a *Great and Difficult Work* ; and that it must not be trifled in, but manag'd with great Diligence, and Seriousness. I have not ask'd Your Leave for this Dedication ; therefore I am answerable only, for the Faults in it, and the Sermon. I rely upon Your Goodness to excuse this Freedom ; and charge the Trespass upon Your Agreeableness to the AUTHOR, who perhaps You at first will not find out.

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I have nothing to say of Mr. *Bowman*, or any one else, only as Charity leads me to hope well of their Intentions. I have always been of Opinion, that too much Jarring, and Controversy amongst us, has had a very destructive Influence upon the Practice, and Tempers of Christians. I am far from censuring particular Persons, as to the Views they may have in their Disputes; and to invidiously speak ill of any by any kind of Artifice, is still greater Immorality.

However, I only answer for myself: I have no Preferments to seek, being both unqualified for them, and much incapacitated thro' my often Infirmities. As I am upon the Decline of Life, I have no ambitious Views; which, perhaps, in my juvenile Years, might be a Temptation to me, as well as others: But now, I thank G O D, I am content in the private Sphere I act in; and never desire to come upon the publick Stage; no, not so much as to have my Name mention'd, only amongst my Friends, and Associates, in this retir'd State.

I rejoice, S I R, at the Happiness of Your Parishoners, in being so favour'd by Providence, as to have You amongst them for their Overseer. You have my most affectionate Prayers. I wait the Returns of them, to hear of the Success of Your Labours, that I may praise G O D with You, and Your People; and thus testify how much,

I am, S I R,

Your most Affectionate,

Most Humble Servant.



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II. COR. ii. 16.

The latter Words. ----- *And who is sufficient for these Things ?*



THE Apostle, in this Second Chapter, gives the *Corinthians* his Reasons, why he came not so soon to them as he intended ; as also, why he wrote this Second Epistle to them. And the Reasons of both these, he shews were much the same, (*viz.*) That *he might not come again in Heaviness*, as Ver. 1st. expresses it ; or least, when he came, he shou'd have Sorrow from them, of whom he ought to rejoice.

It seems, there were many Disorders in these *Corinthian* Churches, which were not yet thoroughly redress'd ; which he desir'd might be before he came ; that he might have no Occasion of Sorrow and Heaviness when he came. The Miscarriages, and ill Behaviour of particular Persons, whether few, or more, are a great Occasion of much Grief and Sorrow, to tender and faithful Ministers ; such who travel in Love for the Good of Souls.

HE had, in the former Epistle, Chap. V. wrote to them pretty sharply concerning the incestuous Person, whom it seems they had not cast out as they ought to have done ; 'till the Apostle, in that Epistle, had strictly enjoyn'd them to do it. But having observ'd the Apostle's Command, in the Execution of the Church Censure upon him ; which, it seems, had brought him to a Sense of his Sin, and a true Sorrow for it ; the Apostle, in this Chapter, entreats them to moderate their Severity towards him, by forgiving him, and receiving him to a Communion in their Church-Assemblies ; that so he might not be swallow'd up with over-much Sorrow, but might receive that Evidence and Confirmation of their Love towards him, *ver. 7, 8.*

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IN the 12th *Ver.* he gives us an Account of his Success in the preaching at *Troas*. There a Door was open'd to him of the Lord ; and, *Ver.* 14th, he breaks forth into a Doxology, or blessing GOD, for the Success which he gave to his Preaching where he came : 'Tho' he met with Enemies to oppose him with all their Might, some envying him, others hating him, and many despising and treating him ill by their Spirit of Malignity, and Want of Christian Charity ; yet the LORD made him to triumph in CHRIST ; and made manifest the Savour of his Knowledge, by them in every Place. When GOD has determin'd to make the Preaching of the Gospel successful, all the Opposition of the most inveterate Enemies shall not hinder it. I don't think it necessary to contend for Forms, or Modes of Worship, or for other Circumstances which are discretional amongst Christian Churches, and may differ as to Times, Persons, and Places, do alter the Circumstances and Cases. All that, I shall leave to more able Heads and Pens to dispute, who may think it worth their Labour. I shall satisfy myself in asserting this only, That when GOD has determin'd to make the Preaching of the Gospel successful ; HE can, when HE pleases, open a Great Door, and Effectual, to His MINISTERS, even where there are many Adversaries, and avowed Enemies to the Christian Doctrines, and Institutions, *I. Cor. xvi. 9.*

IN the 15th Verse of this Chapter, the Apostle shows us how acceptable to GOD, Diligence, and Faithfulness in Preaching the Gospel, is ; tho' the Labours of Ministers meet not with the same Success in all. *We are (says he) unto God a sweet Savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.* Whether Men will receive the Gospel, and the Doctrine that we preach, or reject it ; yet we are a sweet Savour unto GOD, when we are diligent and faithful in preaching it. The Apostle does not advance this from an enthusiastic Rapture ; but from a rational Sense and Experience he had had of GOD's own Method, of propagating Christianity, by the Instrumentality of Those, who were appointed for the building up the Church of CHRIST.

IN *Ver.* 16th, he further explains himself, and shows how differently this Savour of the GOSPEL works. As some are delighted and others nauseated with sweet and fragrant Smells ; why, so the GOSPEL is to them that reject it, a *Savour of Death unto Death*. Thro' their Unbelief, their Hearts become harden'd to their Destruction : But to others (says he) that receive and embrace those glad Tydings, our Preaching proves a *Savour of Life unto Life*. The Savouring, and Relishing, the Joyful News the GOSPEL brings, and accepting the Grace and Mercy it offers, find that LIFE, or Enlivening EFFICACY of it, that entitles them to Eternal LIFE.

AND then follows the Words of the Text: *Who is sufficient for these Things?* Who is able, without a mighty and powerful Assistance of GOD, to preach this blessed and glorious Gospel, as it ought to be preached? This Mighty EFFICACY of it upon the Souls of them, to whom it is a Saviour of Life, is not from us that preach it; (for we are scarce fit to preach it, and much more unable to add so great an EFFICACY to it) but it is from GOD, who, by his Holy Spirit, makes the Word in our Mouths, thus the Effectual Means, for the Salvation of Souls.

Who is sufficient for these Things? The Words are few, but are very weighty: *Sed ad hæc, quis idoneus?* Who is fit? Or who is able of himself, or by his own Power, to preach the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST? It is a difficult Matter; and who is able to encounter, and overcome all the Difficulties they are like to meet with? Something more is requisite to qualify a Minister of the Gospel, than a bare Receiving Orders, either from Bishops, or Presbyters, seeing they are like to meet with much Difficulty in the Work. Now, *who are sufficient for these Things?* Who is able to stand against all the Discouragements, in the Way of their Duty? And to oppose all those Adversaries, master and slight all those Reproaches, that are, and will be cast upon him; and faithfully and courageously to proceed in Preaching and Publishing the Gospel of CHRIST, for the Conversion and Salvation of Souls: *Who is sufficient for all this?* The Words are propounded by way of Question; and we may find the proper Answer to them in the 5th and 6th Verses of the following Chapter. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves; but our Sufficiency is of God: Who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament.*

IN the Text the Apostle intimates, That no mere Man has Ability of himself, to go thro' that great and laborious Employment of Preaching the Gospel, and performing those several Offices belonging to the Ministerial Function. And yet, because it's evident there were then, and has been since, divers that have managed that Employ to the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Souls: He therefore tells us, in the 3d Chapter, whence they had their Ability for it, *viz. from GOD.* He it was that had made them, and must make others, *able Ministers of the New Testament.* The Sense of the Text may be summ'd up in these few Words.

That the Work of the Ministry, is a Work of that Labour and Difficulty, that none could be able to go thorough it without extraordinary Assistance from God. *Who is sufficient for these Things? But our Sufficiency is of God.* I take the Words with the Reference they have to the Answer in the following Chapter.

IN my Discourse from this Subject, I shall endeavour to clear these following Things.

First, Give me Leave to show you, that the Work of the Ministry, is a Work of Labour and Difficulty.

Secondly, That no mere Man has Strength and Ability, in and from himself, to go thorough these Difficulties.

Thirdly, That GOD both has, and can, enable Men for it; and will not be wanting to them that depend upon him, and seek to him for his Help.

Fourthly, Shall then close the Subject with a Use or Two of Application.

First, Suffer me to show you, that the Work of the Ministry is a great Work; a Work fitter for Angels, than Men to manage; and yet wou'd be a Work too hard for them also, without extraordinary Assistance from GOD. They are purer Beings, and ministering Spirits; but then Men cannot so easily converse with them, as we can with one another, who are of the same Species, and of like Infirmities. But, alas! the Work of the Ministry is very difficult upon these Respects; both if we consider the Work itself, and also the great Opposition Ministers meet with in it.

I. CONSIDER the Work it self. The Ministry is a public and sacred Function, instituted by CHRIST, wherein Men, furnished with meet Gifts, and duly call'd, do serve GOD, and his CHURCH, by dispensing and giving forth, wisely and faithfully the Word, and Sacraments; and duly exercising the Discipline belonging to the same, for the Good of Souls, and Edification of the BODY of CHRIST. Who is there, that weighs well each Part of this Work, but may well cry out, with the Apostle in the Text, *Who is sufficient for these Things?*

THE Difficulty of the Work more clearly appears from the Persons we are concern'd with; the Manner of dealing with them; the Diligence and Faithfulness that is requir'd in it; and the exemplary Holiness we are to show in Life and Conversation.

CONSIDER but the Persons we are to deal with; and their different Cases, make the Work very difficult: The Persons are either Sinners, or Saints.

First, SINNERS, (that is) Men in a natural State and Condition such as are unacquainted with GOD, alienated from the Life of GOD, and Enemies to the Cross of CHRIST. Do not the greatest Part of most Congregations consist of these? And how hard is it for Ministers to deal with These? How many Hours of laborious Study has it cost many a Minister of JESUS CHRIST, to know what Words to use, to persuade these Sinners, to come in, and accept of the Grace and Mercy offered them? They would, as Instruments, gladly, not only save themselves, but all that hear them: And to that End, woe and entreat, as the Ambassadors of CHRIST, that they wou'd be reconcil'd to GOD; and yet how few can they prevail with? Consider the Number of Persons about

in the World, who are still in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity. And notwithstanding the urgent Calls and Invitations of Ministers; yet few of these, it is to be feared, are brought in savingly to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. May not many Ministers take up that sad Complaint of the Prophets, Isa. liii. 1. *Who hath believed our Report? And to whom is the Arm of the LORD revealed?* What inviting and persuading Reports do Ministers make of JESUS CHRIST, and his Readiness to receive returning Sinners upon the Terms of the Gospel; and yet they will not believe them? And when Ministers unfold the Doctrine of the Gospel to them, and set forth CHRIST, as longing to receive and embrace returning Sinners; this, that Arm of the LORD is revealed but to few; their Minds and Consciences are but little startled and effected with these Things. Ministers, indeed, preach to Men and Women that have rational Souls; but many a Time the Words in their Mouths can have no more Entrance, nor make any more Impression, than if they were preaching to Stocks and Stones. The Word preached does not profit, unless mixt with Faith in them that hear it. How hard do Ministers find it to pierce the Scales of *Leviathan* of obstinate Sinners? I mean, who have had many a Blow from the Sword of the Spirit, *The Word of GOD*: But no Impression yet made upon their Souls; nor can be, till the Spirit of GOD wields and manages it; not one Sinner's Heart is touched or effected, till God himself undertakes the Work. Perhaps their Reason may be convinc'd; but their Lusts and Passions still keep the Ascendancy over them. The Obstinacy and Impenitency of Sinners, has so bolted their Hearts, that the WORD cannot enter, till He that has the Key of DAVID powerfully and effectually open them: This most certainly contributes towards the Difficulty that attends the Preaching the Gospel.

Secondly, SAINTS: These are another Sort of Persons, with whom Ministers are concern'd; and it's no easy Matter to carry towards these as we ought.

SOME are but young and tender; it may be, but newly or lately converted to the Faith; and so but weak and doubting; are but as *new born Babes*, like those whom the Apostle *Peter* mentions, I. PET. ii. 2. Such also there were among the *Corinthians*, whom the Apostle *Paul* speaks of, I. COR. iii. 1. *And I, Brethren, cou'd not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto Babes in CHRIST.* By Carnal, here, he does not mean such as are Unregenerate; (which is the Sense of the Words sometimes) but he means such as were not so thoroughly instructed and exercis'd in the Christian Duties and Graces, as others were: Them therefore he calls *Babes in Christ*: They were in CHRIST savingly converted; but yet not arriv'd to that Experience and Understanding that afterward he hop'd they wou'd be. Many such as these,

these, Ministers have to deal with; and therefore they are to follow the Apostle's Example, who tells us, in the 2d Verse, how he carried towards these: *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.* The Apostle had taught them plain and easy Truths; not the sublime Mysteries of the Gospel, which were very unfit for young Converts to entertain: His Aim and Desire was to suit himself to their Capacities, (and not in a Way of Ostentation, so much to shew his Learning) as to become all Things to all Men, that he might win some, and that all his Performances might be employ'd for the Use of edifying. This will cost a Minister much Pains and Study to know how to carry to these for their Profitting, so that he may winn them, and not discourage and lose them. Who will question *Paul's* Qualifications for the Work of the Ministry, tho' he in all studied the greatest Plainness? There must be a great Deal of Gentleness and Tenderneſs us'd towards such, as the Apostle tells us he us'd, *I. THESS. ii. 7. We were gentle amongst you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Child.* Ministers must suit themselves to the Capacities of young Converts, who at present are ignorant of many Things; full of Scruples, Objections, Doubts and Fears. This also contributes towards the Difficulty of the Work; for without great Care, such Persons may soon be discouraged.

FURTHER, amongst the Saints and Believers, there are others that are more grown of clearer Understanding, greater Knowledge, and so are stronger than the former: And yet it will cost a Minister some Pains to know how to carry toward these: For tho' they need not so much Instruction as the former; yet, in Regard of Spiritual Sloth which they are subject to, and the Temptations, and Afflictions, and Desertions that often attend them, they have great Need of quickening and comforting Doctrines. How many that know their Master's Will, have Need often to be stirr'd up to do it? How subject are many Christians to wax slothful and dull, and unmindful of their Duty? We may see this by the Spouse in the *CANT. v. 2. I sleep*, says he, *but my Heart waketh.* She had, but a little before, been entertaining her Beloved with her Graces, Service and Obedience; and presently she's asleep; a Fit of Spiritual Sloth seiz'd her. And so it is with many Christians; they are apt sometimes to grow cold; to abate of that Zeal and Fervency, that they have sometimes show'd in the Ways of *GOD*. These now are to be quicken'd by Way of Reproof and Exhortation. They are often to be minded of their Duty when they grow remiss and careless about it. Thus did the Apostle *PETER; II. Epistle. i. 12, 13. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance of these Things, though ye know them, and be established in the present Truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, and put you in*

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Remembrance. The like we find the Apostle Paul does by the Romans, Chap. xv. 14, 15. *I am perswaded of you, my Brethren, that ye also are full of Goodness, fill'd with all Knowledge; able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless (says he) I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in Mind.* THAT IS, He saw there was Need to quicken them up to the Practice of what they knew to be their Duty. So it is with many, or most Christians: They must be often put in Mind of their Duty, and stirr'd up, by Exhortations, to the Practice of it: So sometimes also they have Need of Comforting, as well as Quickening, viz. When they are under violent Temptations, sharp Afflictions, or dark Desertions; then are Ministers to study how to speak a Word in Season to them; then they are to communicate to them the sweet and comfortable Promises contain'd in the Word of God; then they are to act the Part of Barnabas, and be Sons of Consolation; then their Office is the same of their Lord and Master's Christ Jesus, to preach Peace and Good-Will to Men; and whom the Prophet tells us, *was sent to preach good Tidings unto the Meek, to build up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound: To proclaim the acceptable Year of the LORD, to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness,* ISA. lxi. 1, 2, 3. This was the Office of Christ, and the Apostles Practice. See I. Thes. ii. 11, 12. *As you know how we exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a Father doth his Children) that ye would walk worthy of GOD.* He both exhorted and comforted, as he saw their Condition requir'd; and so shou'd all, in Holy Orders, discharge their Sacred Functions. From what I here offer to your Considerations, it is clear, that the Work of the Ministry is great and laborious, in Respect of the Persons they have to deal with; which, if duly weigh'd, might be a Means to keep every one humble and diligent, in what God has call'd them to be employ'd in: They have Business enough of their own to Mind; which, if they were consciencious in, they wou'd have less Time to cavil at others; nor durst they allow in themselves the Spirit of Calumny and Detraction, Railing and Defamation; which, I fear, is too justly charg'd upon many.

Secondly, The Work will appear great, in Respect of the Manner of their Dealings with them. A Minister must be careful as to this. It's evident all are not to be dealt with, after the same Manner; they must use different Methods with Persons of different Tempers: Some are of more meek and tender Spirits, willing to understand their Duty, tho' not so quick at understanding it: Towards these, you must use a great Deal of Meekness and Humility, Tenderness and Condescension; and, as the Apostle speaks, a Minister
must

must become all Things to all Men, that he may win some: To the Weak, says PAUL, became I as weak, that I might gain the Weak, I. COR. ix. 22. An excellent Example for every Clergyman, every Divine, to follow; the Want of this Spirit lays Ministers open to the Charge of Pride and Negligence; then their Sermons will be little regarded, nor their Persons esteem'd, amongst those with whom they are engag'd: There must be a yielding Condescension to Persons, whose Spirits and Temper require it. So says the Apostle, *We were gentle amongst you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Child, I. THESS. ii. 7.* and in *ver. 11.* he compares their Carriage to the Carriage of a Father to his Children. Tender Parents counsel, exhort, and charge their Children: But then they do it with Meekness and Gentleness; and so must all Ministers. Thus the Apostle advises, *Timothy II. Epist. ii. 24. And the Servant of the Lord* (if you please, a Clergyman, or Minister) *must be gentle unto all Men; apt to teach; patient; and, as it is added in the next VER. in Meekness instructing.*

BUT yet there are another Sort of Men, and Women, whom Ministers, sometimes, must treat after another Manner: I mean, obstinate Sinners, who live in prophane and loose Courses; such, who regard not Sermons; but contemn and *bate Reproof*, and despise faithful Ministers for their Faithfulness. GOD knows, there are too many of these amongst us. Now, at the first, Ministers are likewise required to carry meekly towards these, as the Apostle directs, *II. Tim. ii. 25. In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* Some may, for a Time, oppose the Truth out of Ignorance, and Weakness, and not from a Spirit of Hatred and Malice; such as those may possibly be won by Meekness, and Gentleness: GOD may, peradventure, give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, as the Apostle speaks there. But when Sinners grow hardened in Sin, and obstinate, and will not be reclaim'd; then Ministers must rebuke with all the Authority which the Gospel gives them, *Tit. ii. 15.* Magistrates may compel and force their Subjects with the Power of the Sword: But the Power which CHRIST has committed to his Ministers, is not a coercive Power; but yet they have an Authority committed to them; and by this they are to rebuke. They must not fear the Faces of Men; but (as GOD commanded the Prophet) they are to cry aloud, and not to spare; to lift up their Voice like a Trumpet; and to shew Sinners their Transgression, and their Sins, *ISA. lviii. 1.* And if this still be slighted, and Obstinacy increases in them; then they are to use their Power and Authority consonant to the Gospel Method, and as the Nature of the Offence requires, as Censure, Suspension, or Excommunication: An Instance of which you have, *I. COR. 5.* These Things have much Difficulty in them; for they must be manag'd with

great

great Meekness, Compassion, Zeal and Resolution; in all, Eyeing the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Souls.

Thirdly, THE Diligence and Faithfulness, which Ministers are to show in the whole Work, tend to make it laborious and difficult. Ministers are intrusted with a great Charge, the Souls of Men and Women; and to perform their Duty as they ought, must engage them to great Diligence and Faithfulness. The Work of the Gospel is not an idle, but laborious Work. It requires great Pains and Study to know what Arguments to use, either in Sermons, or private Conversation, to perswade Sinners to leave their Sins, and embrace the Tenders of Mercy by JESUS CHRIST. Were such Diligence and Faithfulness more frequently met with, the Clergy wou'd have less Contempt, even from the Wicked, and openly Prophane; and more Esteem from the Generality of Men, in all Stations of Life, than I fear many of them now find. How earnestly did *Paul* long for, and endeavour the Salvation of Souls! He had their Conversion much at Heart. He wou'd not only save his own Soul, but them that heard him. His Concern is express'd by the Pains of a travailing Woman: He travail'd in Birth of the *Galatians*, 'till CHRIST was form'd in them, *Gal. iv. 19.* True Ministers of JESUS CHRIST, are very solicitous to bring many Sons and Daughters to GOD; and if they might do this, they wou'd not think any Pains too much. And as they must be diligent, so they must be also faithful to their Trust. They must not conceal any Part of their Duty; but reveal the whole Will of GOD to them, as Workmen that need not be ashamed. They must keep back nothing that may be profitable to their Hearers; but show and teach them all the Mind and Will of GOD, revealed in His Word, *Acts xx. 20. 27.* If they see any Offence to be reproved, they must not spare the Person; but admonish, reprove, and rebuke him, that so his Blood may not lye at their Door. This is a Minister's Duty, if he will approve himself faithful. They are Stewards; and, says the Apostle, *it's requir'd, that a Man be found faithful, I. COR. iv. 1, 2.* All that I have offer'd as to Diligence, and Fidelity in the Ministry, shows it to be a great and difficult Work.

Fourthly, FURTHER consider but the exemplary Holiness which Ministers are to show in Life and Conversation: And this too, in some sort, will make the Work appear great and difficult. That Holiness is the Duty of all, may be abundantly proved from Scripture, which frequently presseth and enjoineth it. (But that belongs not to my present Design.) But the Holiness of Ministers in particular, is necessary: And truly who sees it not, that considers their Work, and the Place GOD sets them in? Certainly, there is no more effectual Way to bring the Doctrine they preach into Contempt with the Vulgar, nor to cause it to be burlesqu'd, and ridicul'd,

cul'd, than to see them live, and act contrary to what they preach. The Debauchery of *Eli's* Sons, those Sons of *Belial*, soon made Men to abhor the Offering of the LORD, I. *Sam.* ii. 12. 17. How shou'd they, that have cast off the Yoke of GOD themselves, ever perswade others to come under it? The unguarded Conduct of many Ministers, I fear, has tended too much to the supporting, and spreading Vice, Irreligion, Prophaness, and Debauchery, amongst us. I censure no particular Person; but as I've had the Opportunity of seeing the World, I have with Sorrow observ'd, the Remarks and Comments, which Men of much satyrical Wit, and loose Morals, have made upon the Lives and Actions of many in Sacred Orders. See the Reason, and Necessity then, why a *Bishop must be blameless*, to speak in the Apostle's Phrase to *Timothy*, in 1st Epist. iii. Chap. 2. That is, He must give no just Occasion, for any to tax him with Carelessness, and wilful Neglect, and Miscarriages in his Life and Conversation. And this the Apostle declares to have been his Practice, *Acts* xxiv. 16. *Herein do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward God, and toward Men.* It's true, Men may be charg'd with what they never were guilty of; and then, in that Case, the best Improvement is to walk more humbly and circumspectly, and double their Diligence, to keep their Consciences more strictly void of Offence. However, it's plain from these Things, that the Work of the Ministry is a weighty Work, has many Difficulties attending it, if we consider the Work itself.

Secondly, THE Work appears to be great and difficult, if you will but consider the Opposition Ministers meet with in it. These are sometimes, and to some Persons, very great; and therefore, in this Respect, the Ministry is call'd a *Warfare*, I. *Tim.* i. 18. where *Paul* tells him, He had committed this Charge unto him, that he *by them might war a good Warfare.* And truly, it much resembles a Warfare: For as Soldiers, by the Sword, and their Valour, maintain their own, and Prince's just Rights, against such as invade them; so Ministers, by Preaching, are to defend the Faith and Truths of GOD, against all Opposition. But who are sufficient for these Things, considering the Opposers? I shall only beg Leave to mention two. The Devil, and Wicked Men.

THE Devil is a mighty Opposer of the Gospel; and what relates to Christianity, and Man's Salvation. This the Apostle witnesseth, writing to the *Thess.* I. ii. 18. He tells them, That himself, and some others of the Brethren, wou'd have come unto them once again; but *Satan hindred us.* The Preaching of the Gospel is a Work that very much weakeneth Satan's Kingdom; and then no doubt, but he will oppose it all he can. The Devil hindereth several Ways: Sometimes working upon, and in, the corrupted Hearts of Sinners; filling them with Prejudices against the Gos-

each, pel, blinding their Eyes, that they may not see the Excellency of those Things it reveals ; and so hardning their Hearts, that they may not embrace the Mercy it offers them from CHRIST. Sometimes by raising Disputes against the Truths that Ministers preach and publish, as he did at *Athens*, against the Doctrine that *Paul* preached, *Acts* xvii. 17. Sometimes by stirring up Dissentions and Differences amongst good People, *Acts* xv. 1, 2. Thus causing Divisions amongst such who are Professors of Religion, *I. Cor.* iii. 3. or betwixt Ministers and their Parishoners, and People, as too frequently happens ; and sometimes betwixt one Minister and another ; which hinders the Success of their Labours ; as that sharp Contention betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, which forc'd them to part, *Acts* xv. 39. And by raising a Spirit of Persecution against CHRIST, and His Kingdom, and Interest in the World. This Opposition the Devil oft makes, which yet God sometimes overrules for the promoting his Kingdom, *Acts* viii. 1. 4. *They that were scattered, went about every where preaching the Word.* But, doubtless, all this great Opposition the Devil makes, renders the Work of the Ministry more difficult.

So likewise not only the Devil, but Men that are wicked, and bear his Image, make great Opposition to the Work of the Gospel ; not only by distressing good Men, but by a Slight and Contempt, by bitter Scoffs, and shameful Reproaches. How are serious Men frequently scoff'd at, and derided, by the prophane Rabble, and degenerate Race of Men amongst us ? *PAUL* at *Athens* is called a Babbler, and a Setter forth of strange Gods, because he preached unto them *Jesus, and the Resurrection.* *JOHN* the BAPTIST, a Man of Holy Life, that came to prepare our Saviour's Way for Him ; yet they could impudently affirm, *He had a Devil,* *MAT.* xi. 18. Nay, our SAVIOUR himself, whose Conversation was most blameless ; yet, because he preach'd not a Doctrine pleasing to the proud scornful *Jews*, they blasphemously affirm him to be a *glutinous Man, a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners,* *Ver.* 19. Is not the same Contempt cast upon CHRIST, his Doctrines, and Miracles, now, by some amongst us ? And the Apostle met with Dishonour, as well as Honour, evil Report as well as good Report, and were counted Deceivers, tho true, *II. Cor.* vi. 8. How were the Prophets, and Messengers, sent to *Jerusalem* of old, scoff'd at, and despis'd ? *II. Chron.* xxxvi. 16. Such is the Spirit of Men of lewd Principles and Practices, that they contemn and slight all that is sacred and good. These are the Oppositions that tend to make the Work of the Ministry great and difficult.

Secondly, I SHALL now show you, That no mere Man has Strength and Ability of his own sufficient to manage such a Work as this is. Surely, a few Words will serve to prove a Truth so apparently clear as this is. Take but a Review of what has

gone before : View the Work in the several Parts of it ; and consider the Frailties Human Nature labours under ; then, I doubt not, but you'll be ready to cry out, with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these Things ?* Who has Strength, Ability, or Skill of his own, to go thorough such a Work in the several Parts of it ? It is a Work that will employ both Head, and Heart too, to go through it, as it requires. Who is there that knows how to deal with Saints, and Sinners ? Remember none must be indifferent, and unconcern'd in the Work : And how difficult to know what Words to use, what Arguments to pitch upon, to comfort and encourage the one under their Burthens ; and to persuade the others to forsake their evil Courses, and savingly to close with the Lord JESUS CHRIST ? Had Ministers the Tongues of Angels ; cou'd they use the most insinuating Expressions that the Heart of Man cou'd invent ; yet many Times their Preaching will not prevail. The presuming Sinner will go on in his Sin still ; and the sorrowful, humble, despairing Soul, sometimes refuses to be comforted. All the Rhetorick in the World, or the profoundest Learning, the most awakening and cogent Motives and Arguments, will not prevail of themselves, with one Sinner to repent, and turn. Think what Self-denial, Patience, Humility, Condescension, and Meekness, that Ministers must use, in dealing with such, who are under their Care and Charge. What is requisite for them, is not within the Reach of any mere Man ; but must be sought elsewhere, even in Him, from whom all have their Sufficiency.

Thirdly, This leads me to consider, that God has, and can, enable Men for this Work, and will not be wanting to them who depend upon, and seek unto him for it. It is undeniably true, that your Sufficiency is of God ; no Minister has it in himself ; but he may, and must have it from the God of all Grace : It was He that made them *able Ministers of the New Testament ; not of the Letter, but of the Spirit* ; as in the next Chap. II COR. iii. 5, 6. The Apostles were able Ministers indeed : How many Souls were they the Instruments of Converting ? Three Thousand at one Time, and Five Thousand at another, were converted by the Preaching of *Peter*, ACTS, Chap. ii. and the 4th. What famous Churches at *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Colosse*, *Thessalonica*, and other Places, were founded by the Ministry and Preaching of the Apostles ? *So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevail'd*. And this Word of God has made many able Ministers since that Time too. What glorious Lights were there about the Reformation ? *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Zuinglius*, *Melancthon*, *Bucer*, *Peter Martyr*, and many more ! These God made able Ministers, and able Instruments, for the spreading the Gospel-Light in these Parts of *Europe*. And how many glorious Lights has *England* had in

her

her Days? *Clerus Anglicanus, Stupor Mundi*; the Clergy of England was then the Astonishment of the World. And I doubt not, but we have, and still shall have, the Continuance of such, who are both eminent for Piety and Learning in this Age; who, as they have the Advantage and Helps of those that are gone before them, so are concern'd not only to improve in Learning and Politeness, but in sincere Piety, and true Holiness, in their Conversations too. GOD will not be wanting still to those who do humbly depend upon Him, and seek to Him. What an Encouragement we have from the Hopes of our Blessed SAVIOUR'S Presence *being with his Servants to the End of the World*, MAT. xxviii. 20. CHRIST will own and bless those Labourers of His, whom he sends into his Vineyard; not that every Minister can expect from this, to see the same Success of his Labours: For equal Success, to every faithful Minister's Work, we must not look for. But every faithful Minister of CHRIST, may expect the Presence of CHRIST with him, to own and assist him in his Work. The Promises, which he made unto his Disciples, are, surely, very great Encouragements to his Ministers, in all Ages of the World. See JOHN xv. 26. compar'd with Chap. xvi. 7. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father: even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* Then the 7th Verse in the next Chap. *It is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.* So on. Scripture must be our Guide to Christianity; and the Rule whereby all Ministers are to try, judge, and propagate all the Doctrines of the Christian Faith.

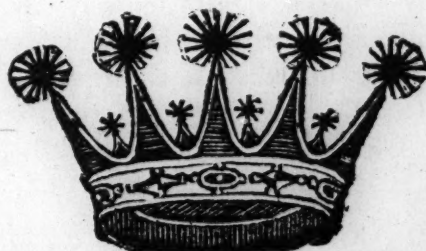
IF you will bear with me, I shall trespass only, while I endeavour to make some Improvement of what has been offer'd to your Considerations. Most of you know these Things, I am reminding you of; and are better Judges of them, than I can, or dare, think my self: However, I will venture to say, the Ministry ought to be enter'd into, with the greatest Awe, Reverence, and Humility; since, so few are equal to the Work, or sufficiently qualified for it. None should rush inconsiderately, and precipitantly, upon it; without any Regard to their Ability, and Fitness, for what they undertake: A voluble Tongue, some Knowledge of the Scripture, and a convenient Share of Assurance, is not all that is requisite, to qualify a Person for Holy Orders. The Cure of Souls, is a most solemn and awful Thing; it may make a Man tremble, to think, so many Souls GOD has committed to my Charge and Care. Sure, did Persons think of this more, they wou'd be more cautious, how they enter'd upon the Ministry; and more humble, circumspect, and faithful, when in it; knowing, GOD will require these Souls at their Hands. Men of Merit deserve

serve Preferment ; but Preferment, and Dignity, is not to be their chief Aim : They are made Shepherds, and Watchmen, to take Care of, and watch over, the Flocks of CHRIST, committed to their Care. The Work is great ; and they should lay out themselves, for the spiritual Good of Souls ; if they wou'd hope for CHRIST's Assistance, to help them under their many Infirmities, and Short-comings ; and be able, to give a good Account of their Stewardship, at last.

IF it be not an offensive Digression ; allow me, now, to address my self, to the People committed to the Care of Ministers. Surely, not only in your publick Prayers, in the Church, but in your private, and secret Devotions, you ought to pray for them ; since, they are so insufficient for the Work ; and are sure, to meet with many great Difficulties, Discouragements, and Temptations. Your own Good, and their Success, are link'd together, and joyntly concern'd. The Apostle, tho' eminently gifted, saw great Need of the People's Prayers : *Brethren, pray for us*, I. THES. v. 25. And how earnest is *Paul*, with the *Romans*, upon this Account, for himself ? ROM. xv. 30. *Now, I beseech you, Brethren, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST's Sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive, together with me, in your Prayers to GOD for me.* People shou'd pray, that Ministers may speak suitable Words ; and that GOD wou'd direct, and influence, their Doctrines, that they may be edifying to their precious Souls ; that the Messages they bring from GOD, (*that is*) in his Name, may be seasonable, and suitable, to the Good of their Souls : Pray for the Blessing of GOD upon their Work ; and cavil not, and despise not, their Performances. You would have serious Ministers ; and you ought to be such serious People. Pray, that the Words they deliver, may run, and be glorified ; that hereby, the Kingdom of *Satan* may be weaken'd, and the Interest of CHRIST promoted, and advanc'd in the World. And as you ought to pray for them ; you ought also to own, and esteem them, for their Works Sake ; and to submit to their Doctrine ; to be taught, instructed, rebuk'd, reprov'd ; and, whatever Method the Authority of the Gospel gives them, for the Good of your Souls, and Growth in Grace. So, see I. THES. v. 12. *We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the LORD, and admonish you.* Own their Power, which the Gospel supports, and submit to it ; It is deliver'd to them by CHRIST, and they are oblig'd to use it in his Name. Ministers meet with Contempt enough, from the prophane World : Add not, to that Contempt, by shewing the like towards them. It may be, their Persons may be mean, and their Condition in the World low ; but, remember, they are the Servants of CHRIST ; and, for His, and his Work's Sake, esteem them.

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I SHALL now return to the Clergy, the Ministers and Servants of Souls. SIRS, Tho' your Work be difficult, yet be not discourag'd; since, *your Sufficiency is of GOD; who, by his Spirit, makes you able Ministers of the New Testament*: Look to Him, for Help, in every Time of Need; that He wou'd assist, and bless you in your Work: Make his Word, your chief Study, to qualify you for being *faithful Ministers of the New Testament*. PAUL's Advice to *Timothy*, is, *To give Attendance to Reading*, I. TIM. iv. 13. Study the Scriptures well; and they will not only make you wise unto Salvation, but will likewise furnish you, with those Truths, which will make you useful to others: For all Scripture (take it together) is profitable; for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; II. TIM. iii. 15, 16, 17. Let your Thoughts be much upon the First and Second Epistles to *Timothy*, and that to *Titus*. Follow the Direction, the Apostle there has given; and that will be a Means, to qualify you to be *faithful Ministers*. This will direct you, to a plain, profitable Way of Preaching; which, tho' perhaps it is not now the Mode; yet, is most likely, to be of the greatest Use, to the Generality of your Hearers; which are no Judges of Elegance, Learning, or Oratory, in the several Parts of it. Archbishop TILLOTSON, and many pious, learned Men, since his Time, by their plain and familiar Address, favour what I am now advising to. He that studies the Benefit of Souls, will not care to have his Preaching, *with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom; but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, I. COR. ii. 4. This is the Method, to be faithful to the Trust reposed in you: Let this be your Practice; and your Lives, and Conversations, agreeable to it; and then, you will teach, by your Doctrine, and Example too: You, then, will not give so much Occasion, to any, to condemn and despise Ministers, as too frequently is seen: Carry so, *That you may adorn the Doctrine of your Saviour in all Things*: And let every one follow PAUL's Advice to *Timothy*, I. TIM. iv. 16. *Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them: For in so doing, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee*. Which GOD, of his infinite Mercy, grant, through JESUS CHRIST: To Whom, with the Father, and Spirit, be all Honour, Glory and Praise; now, and for ever. Amen.



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